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## Suicide Attack by Japanese

# Raborn Recalls Day Hancock Sizzled

CPYRGHT

By DON ALLGOOD

NORFOLK — The Japanese

kamikaze whipped across the U.S. carrier Hancock, turned and came back very low. The pilot laid his bomb squarely on the flight deck.

The explosion blasted a gaping hole in the deck and blew the suicide plane out of the air. It cartwheeled the length of the "Fighting Hannah," setting fires among parked aircraft as it went.

The Hancock was on fire "stem to stern," in the words of Vice Adm. (ret.) William F. Raborn, who was there that day in April, 1945.

The Hancock's planes were in the air, attacking the Japanese battleship Yamamoto, when their own ship was blasted.

"We looked like the Franklin (celebrated survivor of another kamikaze attack) but two and a half hours later we landed our air group," Raborn reminisced in an interview Saturday.

As executive officer of the Hancock, Raborn was in charge of fire-fighting and damage control.

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Burning debris was shoved overboard. Workers chopped away shattered wood in the deck and fitted pre-measured stanchions and girders under the hole. Steel plates went over the opening and were "Toe-nailed" into place by means of pre-drilled holes around the edges.

In anticipation of just such an emergency, the materials were ready and waiting.

"We couldn't plan the attacks, but we could plan our responses," Raborn said.

This attention to planning is a hallmark of the stocky, red-haired retiree — now an exceedingly active civilian as vice-president of Aerojet-General Corp.

Raborn was deputy chief of naval operations for research when he retired in 1963.

He had been responsible for development of the Polaris missile system, one of the most successful technical projects ever undertaken.

After retirement, he served for 14 months (until last June) as chief of the Central Intelligence Agency. Under his guidance, the CIA — embarrassed

by the Bay of Pigs fiasco in Cuba — formed a long-range planning board to look ahead 15 years for "the planned unplanable."

Not surprisingly, the affable Raborn is reticent about the ultrasecret agency but not about his reasons for leaving.

"I took the job with the understanding I would stay until professional leadership was developed," he said. "I was pleased to help in a very difficult time."

Raborn was succeeded by the present CIA director, Richard Helms, the first director to come up through the intelligence ranks. Helms was Raborn's deputy.

Raborn now represents a diversified spaceage company involved in a host of activities — from producing mail-sorting equipment to a solid fuel rocket booster that Raborn says can put 10 million pounds in orbit.

Typically, the capability that fascinates Raborn is the "planned unplanable." The booster, he says, could be set up on a pad and in effect be an instant rescue vehicle for space missions.